

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 10, 2023

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Comer:

In light of alarming new anti-democratic actions taken by Governor Ron DeSantis, we once again urge you to hold a Committee hearing to examine ongoing efforts to subvert democracy in the State of Florida. In May, we asked you to convene an Oversight and Accountability Committee hearing on the shocking trends of anti-democratic abuses of power in the state.¹ Our concerns have gone unanswered and, without any oversight or accountability, the situation continues to worsen. Disturbingly, on August 9, 2023, Governor DeSantis suspended yet another democratically-elected State Attorney, Monique Worrell, from office in order to install a political ally.²

Under its current administration, Florida's executive and legislative branches of government have engaged in a relentless assault on the fundamental rights and freedoms of Floridians. The Florida Governor has continued to force through this repressive agenda by extreme and lawless means and has taken further acts of political intimidation tactics against elected officials.³ Since our initial correspondence, the situation in Florida has continued to escalate.⁴

On June 22, 2023, several Members of Congress heard testimony from Florida State Rep. Anna Eskamani, State Attorney Andrew Warren, who was also removed from office by Governor DeSantis, and Florida residents Ms. Jasmine Burney-Clark and Mr. Brian Covey about a disturbing laundry list of anti-democratic abuses taking place across the State of Florida and metastasizing throughout the United States.⁵

¹ Congressman Maxwell Frost. "Letter to The Honorable Chairman Comer of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability," May 19, 2023. <http://frost.house.gov/media/blog-post/letter-honorable-chairman-comer-committee-oversight-and-accountability>; *We're Reaching Fascism's "Inflection Point"—Again*, The Hill (Feb. 8, 2023) (online at <https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/3849326-were-reaching-fascisms-inflection-point-again/>); *The U.S. is Still on the Path to Becoming a 'Fascist Country': Sociologist*, Business Insider (Nov. 25, 2022) (online at www.businessinsider.com/fascist-country-us-on-way-becoming-sociologist-2022-11).

² *DeSantis Suspends Orlando-Area State Attorney in Second Sacking of Democratically Elected Prosecutor*, CNN (Aug. 9, 2023) (online at <https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/09/politics/ron-desantis-monique-worrell-orlando-attorney/index.html>).

³ *Fascism's History Offers Lessons about Today's Attacks on Education*, Scientific American (Apr. 7, 2023) (online at <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/fascisms-history-offers-lessons-about-todays-attacks-on-education/>).

⁴ *Frost Rips 'Abuses' by DeSantis at Unusual Congressional Hearing*, Orlando Sentinel (June 22, 2023) (online at <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2023/06/22/frost-rips-abuses-by-desantis-at-unusual-congressional-hearing/>).

⁵ Rep. Maxwell Alejandro, Frost. "Anti-Democratic Abuses of Power in the State of Florida." *Medium* (blog), June 30, 2023. <https://repmaxwellfrost.medium.com/anti-democratic-abuses-of-power-in-the-state-of-florida-99ff5c76fb7d>

Covered in this testimony was the fact that Governor DeSantis suspended indefinitely a democratically-elected State Attorney Andrew Warren from office, an action that a federal judge subsequently found violated the Constitution but ruled that the courts do not have the power to reinstate him.⁶ We are alarmed that Governor DeSantis – who is now campaigning for the Republican nomination for President of the United States – has now similarly suspended another democratically-elected State Attorney, Monique Worrell. This removal flies in the face of the courts and the Constitution in what appears to be a scheme to undermine the will of the electorate where the courts cannot provide a legal remedy for the Constitutional violation.

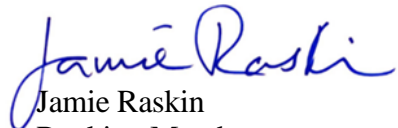
It is disheartening to witness the erosion of the foundations upon which our nation was built. In Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution, the Republican Guaranty Clause compels Congress to “guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government,” which means not a Republican Party form of government but a representative government based on principles of fair democratic representation and participation, due process, freedom of speech, and freedom of association for all.

Given the seriousness of the current attack on democracy and freedom in Florida and other states, the urgent need for Congressional action has become more dire than ever. A full Committee hearing is essential to understand the pattern of these abuses of power and to identify the steps that must be taken to protect the rights and freedoms of Floridians and Americans living in other states witnessing similar attacks. We look forward to your prompt reply.

Very truly yours,



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight
and Accountability



Daniel S. Goldman
Member of Congress

⁶ *Ron DeSantis Just Notched a Win in Court. But the Judge Says He Still Violated a Prosecutor's Free Speech Rights*, NBC (Jan. 20, 2023) (online at <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/judge-upholds-ron-desantis-suspension-elected-state-attorney-rcna61683>).